

FACE Program Fact Sheet

Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation

Department of Health and Family Services * Division of Public Health
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Youth Camp Counselor Dies of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning from Malfunctioning Furnace

BACKGROUND

The Wisconsin Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program received reports of 102 occupational fatalities that occurred in 2000, including 5 cases of workers under age 18. One of those occurred when a youth camp counselor died of carbon monoxide poisoning.

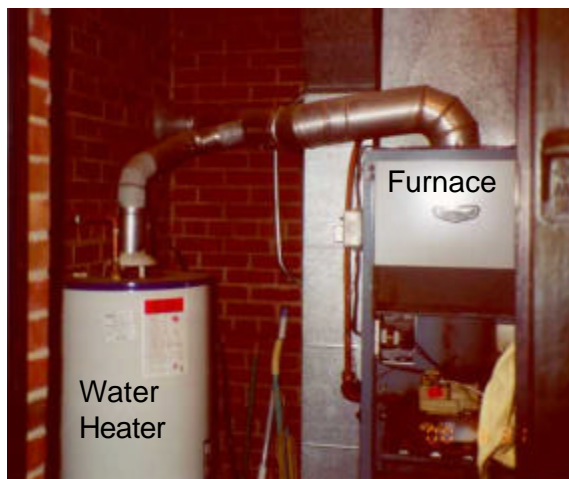
This fact sheet describes the incident and requests that campground operators and other employers who use gas fueled appliances heed the listed recommendations.

THE INCIDENT

A 15-year-old male camp counselor had worked at a youth camp for nine weeks, then stayed after the camp closed to assist with clean-up. On the night of the incident, he was the only person assigned to sleep in the building that housed the health services.

The furnace room in the building contained an LP gas fueled furnace and LP gas fueled water heater. The youth turned on the furnace before he went to sleep in a room next to the furnace room. He kept the windows and doors closed. The furnace malfunctioned while he slept, causing carbon monoxide to accumulate throughout the building. He was found dead in bed the following morning and the coroner noted the cause of death as carbon monoxide poisoning.

There were no records to indicate when the furnace and water heater had been inspected or repaired, nor were there any carbon monoxide detectors in the building.



View of Furnace Room

RECOMMENDATIONS

To prevent similar occurrences, employers who use gas fueled appliances in the workplace should:

- **ensure the appliances are installed and maintained to prevent production and buildup of carbon monoxide.**
- **follow appliance manufacturer's recommendations for inspections.**
- **install carbon monoxide detectors in buildings with gas fueled appliances.**

The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, in agreement with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) conducts research on occupational fatalities. The Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program focuses on identifying factors that increase the risk of work-related fatal injuries. The Wisconsin FACE Program helps in the development and use of improved safety measures for preventing fatal work injuries.

PLEASE POST

FACE information is produced and distributed to provide current, relevant education on methods to prevent severe work-related injuries.

If you have comments or questions, please call the FACE Project at 608/266-7298, or write:

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